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## Soviet Troop Shift

The Soviets are playing a very dangerous game in the Middle East, one it might behoove President Carter to warn them about—in public and in the strongest possible terms, before the game turns into something else entirely.

Recently, spokesmen for Afghan guerrillas claimed the Soviets had redeployed sizeable numbers of their troops in Afghanistan closer to the Iranian border. Last week, National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski warned that there also has been a steady build-up of forces within the Soviet Union near the Soviet-Iranian border. Brzezinski said the deployment pattern was similar to the one used by the Soviets before their invasion of Afghanistan.

Probably the growing Soviet presence is designed to fulfill a dual political purpose: (1) To pressure the Ayatollah Khomeini in his dealings with Iranian leftist students who have been involved in several clashes with their Moslem colleagues recently, and (2) to be ready to take advantage of whatever confusion might ensue inside Iran with the fall of the ayatollah's regime or military actions taken by the U.S. to free the hostages.

But, on the darker side of the horizon, CIA Director Stansfield Turner's report to the Senate Energy Committee this week must be taken into account. Turner, in a rare public appearance, warned the panel that the Soviets, who are currently the world's biggest oil producers, may become oil importers in the next few years as their production peaks and turns downhill. Turner said the U.S. should expect, "more forceful action, ranging from covert subversion to intimidation, or, in the extreme, military action. . . ." from the Soviets.

President Carter would do well to remind the Soviets of the importance of Middle East oil to the U.S. and its allies, appearances of "weakness" in Afghanistan notwithstanding. There is no way the U.S. can allow the strategic approaches to the Persian Gulf—through which massive amounts of the free world's oil flow—to fall under the control of the Soviets. That is a matter of survival.